

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8768

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: SWEL, IT

SUBJ: ITALY EARTHQUAKE REHABILITATION: AID DIRECTOR

REF: STATE 169318

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES AID CONCURRENCE IN OPTION VII APPROACH TO UTILIZATION OF US CONTRIBUTION TO ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE REHABILITATION.

2. ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT RECONSTRUCTION IN THE FRIULI AREA WILL BE A LONG TERM AFFAIR, THERE ARE A COUPLE OF POINTS WHICH ARE WORTH MAKING NOW. THE POLITICAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OUR MONETARY CONTRIBUTION TO THIS ENTERPRISE ARE MULTIPLE. THOUGH THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT ENOUGH TIME TO MAKE A VISIBLE IMPACT BEFORE THE ELECTIONS IN JUNE IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE CAN LONG POSPONE MAKING THAT IMPACT WITHOUT RAISING EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS OR INDEED OUR MOTIVATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, AN INEVITABLY VISIBLE AID PRESENCE (EVEN INTERMITTENT) OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS OR SO COULD BE A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO THE ITALIANS WHO EXPECT, PERHAPS OPTIMISTICALLY, THAT THE KIND OF WORK WE PROPOSE TO UNDERTAKE WOULD HAVE BEEN EOMPLETED LONG SINCE.

3. OUR SUPPORT OF OPTION VII WAS BASED TO A GREAT EXTENT UPON THE ELEMENT OF REDUCED RISK: IT AVOIDS HOUSING WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE THE AREA OF GREATEST CONTROVERSY; IT FORESEES PROJECTS WITH HIGH VISIBILITY AND, WE ARE HOPEFUL, A MINIMUM OF DEPENDENCE UPON THE WORKINGS OF THE ITALIAN BUREAUCRACY;

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IT PROVIDES THE BREATEST FLEXIBILITY AMONG THE OPTIONS

PRESENTED. HOWEVER, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE TIME FRAME WITHIN WHICH OPTION VII WAS PRESENTED REPRESENTS A MAXIMUM WHICH, WITH SOME LUCK AND A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION, CAN BE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED IN TERMS OF HAVING SPECIFIC PROJECTS SELECTED AND LAUNCHED, IF NOT ENTIRELY COMPLETED. IN THIS REGARD, THE EMBASSY WOULD HOPE THAT ALL THE AID MONEYS WOULD BE COMMITTED BY SUMMER OF 1977.

4. THE EMBASSY AGREES THAT MR. CONSTANTINO'S CONTINUED PRESENCE IN ITALY SHOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. HOWEVER, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN EXPERIENCED MIDDLE-GRADE PROGRAM OFFICER TO THE EMBASSY WHO WOULD BE RESIDENT IN UDINE. WE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO PROVIDE ALL-IMPORTANT CONTINUITY OVER THE NEXT YEAR AS WELL AS SERVE AS A POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE EMBASSY AND AID/CONSTANTINO DURING THAT TIME. HE SHOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE SOME COMPETENCE IN ITALIAN.

5. WITH REGARD TO AN AID PRESENCE HERE, WE ASSUME THAT EARLY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE PROJECTS FINALLY SELECTED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ENGAGE ONE OR MORE INDIGENOUS ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS. BECAUSE OF A CONGERIES OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS THE EMBASSY WOULD OF COURSE EXPECT TO BE CONSULTED IN THE SELECTION OF SUCH PERSONNEL. WE WOULD EXPECT, TOO, THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE DIRECTOR, CONTRACT PERSONNEL OF THAT TYPE WOULD COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH THE PROGRAM OFFICER IN UDINE. BEAUDRY

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